Public Opinion, National Character, and Britain's Failed Defence of the Netherlands, 1793-1795

Graeme Callister

Senior Lecturer in History, York St John University, York, UK

g.callister@yorksj.ac.uk

ORCID: 0000-0003-3651-3919

Dr Graeme Callister is Senior Lecturer in History at York St John University. He has previously worked on Napoleonic France and Anglo-Franco-Dutch relations in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. His first book *War, Public Opinion and Policy in Britain, France and the Netherlands 1785-1815* appeared in 2017.

Public Opinion, National Character, and Britain's Failed Defence of the Netherlands, 1793-1795

This article examines the British government's failure to commit adequate resources to defend the Netherlands from the threat of revolutionary France in the campaigns of 1793, 1794 and 1795. It is argued that alongside the well-known military and diplomatic setbacks, the inadequacy of Britain's engagement can be understood by examining ministers' preconceptions of the Netherlands and Dutch national character. These understandings were largely derived from British public opinion of the Netherlands. The article shows that British perceptions of Dutch strength, wealth and national character led ministers to presume too much of their ally, and contributed to the limitation of their own commitments.

Keywords: Britain, the Netherlands, public opinion, national character, foreign policy, Revolutionary Wars

On 1 February 1793 the French National Convention declared war on King George III of Great Britain and Stadholder William V of the United Provinces of the Netherlands.[1] The declaration was not unexpected on either side of the Channel, but was the result of a steady deterioration in relations between France and the two "maritime powers" over the preceding months. Both Britain and the Netherlands had already begun moves to mobilise their forces following the suspension of formal diplomatic relations with France in the aftermath of the fall of Louis XVI, and in the face of growing French threats to the River Scheldt.[2] Britain's first concern upon the formal outbreak of conflict was to move to ensure the defence of the Dutch Republic, quickly deciding to send naval and land forces to the aid of her continental ally. The main reasons for this were twofold. Firstly, the coastal littoral of the Netherlands was an area of acute strategic sensitivity, or what Christopher Hall termed "obsessive worry", to British foreign policy.[3] The rivers and estuaries of the Dutch coast were some of the

very few areas within striking distance of Britain to offer anchorages sufficient to shelter a fleet large enough to carry an invasion force; as such, enemy control of the Dutch coast would threaten to undermine the Royal Navy's "western approaches" strategy, and had the potential to pose a threat to British maritime superiority in home waters. Secondly, by 1793 the Netherlands represented a key plank in Britain's continental diplomatic strategy, such as it was, acting as Britain's foremost ally and, alongside Hanover, giving Britain a clear foothold in continental affairs.

It is thus little surprise that Britain offered full support to the Netherlands in the face of French threats in the last weeks of 1792, and that British ships and troops were rushed to the Low Countries upon the declaration of war the following year. What is slightly more surprising, perhaps, is the subsequent failure of the British government to take adequate steps to prevent the French conquest of the Netherlands over the next two years. The latter issue is at the heart of this article, which seeks to understand the assumptions behind the decision making that left Britain's commitment so inadequate to the task at hand. Certainly the immediate defeat was military; the campaigns were hampered throughout by weak military leadership and poor coordination between the allies, while the fruits of the French *levée-en-masse* eventually left the allied armies in the Low Countries heavily outnumbered. Yet there were also diplomatic and strategic errors that led Britain to fail to make adequate provision for the defence of her ally. Military ineptitude was compounded by political insouciance that meant that the British Cabinet did not face up to the extent of the threat until too late, and failed to provide the men, money, or materials to ensure the security of the Netherlands. This is not to argue that a greater commitment would have ensured victory, but the lack of material commitment from London almost certainly helped to ensure defeat. The other powers involved must of course bear their share of the blame, not least the Dutch Stadholder's

regime, but the fact remains that the resources committed by Britain bear little relation to the apparent acute strategic concern that they felt for the region.

This article will argue that British politicians failed to respond to the threat to the Netherlands partly because they fundamentally misjudged the resources, strength of will, and internal political situation of the Dutch Republic. While British struggles to obtain Austro-Prussian commitments to the Low Countries have long been recognised, there has been little focus on British attempts to get the Netherlands to shoulder a greater burden in the campaign.[4] Moreover, traditional accounts of the campaign have focused on diplomatic wrangling or operational actions, rather than on the understandings and preconceptions underpinning policy decisions.[5] It will be argued here that British ministers and representatives in the Netherlands continued to view their Dutch ally through the prism of the eighteenth-century alliance, which had ascribed to the Netherlands a key role in limiting French expansionism, and that they made judgements based on what they believed that they already knew about the Netherlands, its resources, and the character of its people, rather than on firmly objective analyses of the situation. The article will therefore outline the assumptions and attitudes behind Britain's Dutch policy, and will show that these understandings help to explain the inadequacy of the British commitment. As N.A.M Rodger pointed out, the eighteenth-century Anglo-Dutch alliance was "bedevilled throughout by the ignorance and unrealistic expectations of British politicians", an issue that this article will show came to a head with the campaigns of 1793-95.[6]

This article maintains that there were three main causes for the failure of Britain's attempts to defend the Netherlands in 1793-95. The first is the military defeat to France's armies, and while Britain played its part in the farcical allied campaigns, the Austrian, Prussian, and Dutch forces must also accept a share of the blame. The second

is diplomatic, as Britain was unable to forge a functional coalition and failed to prevent the Austrian and Prussian withdrawal from the Low Countries by late summer 1794, which severely undermined their military position. These operational and diplomatic issues have been largely covered elsewhere. However, it is the final reason that this article will focus on most fully. It will be argued that the British government repeatedly misapprehended the military and financial strength of the Netherlands, and remained convinced almost to the very end that the Republic should be capable of reproducing the exertions of the glorious heyday of the Anglo-Dutch alliance a century earlier. As such, they felt that the situation could be saved by further Dutch, rather than British, commitment. Very much linked to this is the argument that the British government also showed a clear misunderstanding of Dutch willingness to fight, and struggled to grasp that their conception of Dutch national character bore little resemblance to the dynamics that motivated the Republic's leadership or people in the early 1790s. It is argued here that the misunderstandings of Dutch strength, finances, supposed character and willingness to fight stemmed from the representations prevalent in British latent opinion of the Netherlands or, in other words, that the politicians based their policies on what they thought they already knew about the fundamental nature of the country.

This article therefore moves beyond existing operational or diplomatic understandings to examine the oft-neglected constructed realities, attitudes and assumptions that underpinned British policy, and their effect on the campaigns. There is of course a core methodological problem in seeking to understand the impetus behind foreign policy, and that is, in the words of Muriel Chamberlain, that "the basic assumptions upon which it was based are almost never discussed by those who made it".[7] There is almost never any "smoking gun" to explain the interpretive frameworks used to assess available information and to come to a policy decision. This article will

therefore focus on demonstrating the correlation between attitudes or *mentalités* regarding the Netherlands, and the action (or lack of it) taken by British ministers.

Overall British strategic policy was formulated in Cabinet and in consultation with the king, but Prime Minister William Pitt, Foreign Secretary Lord William Grenville, and Henry Dundas, Home Secretary until July 1794 and thereafter Secretary for War, increasingly formed an informal triumvirate that was able to direct decision making. Beyond the Cabinet, there was a whole raft of men responsible for feeding information, intelligence and recommendations to those at the top, from ambassadors such as Lord Auckland or later Lord St Helens, to parliamentary under-secretaries such as James Burges in the Foreign Office, administrators like Evan Neapan in the War Office, diplomatic staff such as William Elliot or Herbert Taylor, or grandees on the fringes of power like the Marquess of Buckingham or Duke of Leeds. This information was, however, frequently fragmentary, often mildly ill informed, and generally mediated by the writer's own preconceptions or interpretations.

It is the contention of this article that the interpretations on which policy makers leaned were those that had become entrenched notions in British public opinion of the Netherlands throughout the eighteenth century. These notions included assumptions about the wealth, strength, and disposition of the Netherlands, as well as preconceptions about the national character of the Dutch people. As I have argued elsewhere, late eighteenth-century public opinion can be largely split into two distinct if overlapping analytical categories: active opinion and latent opinion.[8] Active public opinion refers to the collected articulated thoughts of a certain public on a certain subject, and arose as a product of deliberate discussion and debate of an issue in the public sphere; the sum total or aggregate of the public's reactions to something could be roughly labelled its opinion. This opinion did not need to be unitary or universal, and could indeed be

severely divided, with different sections of the public holding radically different views. It also need not adhere to the Habermasian standard of "rational-critical" debate; while many learned men undoubtedly attempted to imbue their discourses with rationality, problems with accuracy of information and the vagaries of human intellect meant that many conversations in the public sphere would often have little objectively rational about them. As is so often the case, a lack of rationality or criticality would not make people cling to their opinions any less stridently. However, it is not this strand of opinion that concerns this article. The second strand of public opinion, which is here called latent opinion, placed public opinion as an intangible measure of "truth" largely divorced from the influence of individual beliefs, or, as Keith Baker stated, "a principle of legitimacy beyond the system".[9] This strand of opinion was the product of underlying identities and socio-cultural norms; supposed realities that were "latently present in unconscious mentalities".[10] It included learned prejudices, perceptions, preconceptions and assumptions about the world that had developed in public reputation and had, in the words of the opening edition of the famed *Anti-Jacobin* newspaper, "obtained a sort of prescriptive credit, and are referred to upon all occasions, as if established beyond dispute."[11] As such, latent public opinion provided a conceptual framework for understanding the world. The framework was by no means unmalleable or unable to adapt to changing circumstance, and nor were those steeped in a particular latent opinion bound to follow its diktats. Latent opinion instead provided a set of cultural reference points in a world in flux, or a series of expectations to which people frequently strove to adhere.

British latent opinion of the Dutch had developed through centuries of commercial, religious, military, political and personal ties, and reflected Britons' somewhat ambivalent attitudes to a country that had been both a great ally and a great

rival.[12] The Netherlands certainly came in for its fair share of xenophobic disparagement: to call something "Dutch" was to insult it, and British stereotypes tended to focus on negative supposed traits of ponderousness, greed, mendacity, and selfishness.[13] Many British commentators highlighted perceived Dutch phlegmatism and dourness, with novelist and traveller Ann Radcliffe averring that "there are more occasions to celebrate, and fewer celebrations, than in most European countries."[14] Yet for all the casual insults hurled at their North Sea neighbours, British opinion continued to hold the Netherlands in some regard; as Radcliffe acknowledged, the Dutch Republic was believed to have much to celebrate. Although there was a clear acknowledgement by the later eighteenth century of decline since the heyday of the Dutch Golden Age, British opinion continued to see the Netherlands as wealthy, prosperous, and rich in resources. Adam Smith described the Netherlands in the *Wealth of Nations* in 1776 as a country of great riches, "overflowing" with mercantile capital and "the great emporium for all European goods."[15] In late 1792, shortly before the outbreak of war, the *World* newspaper declared that "the Dutch, rest on a pinnacle of strength, prosperity, peace and happiness."[16] This wealth and prosperity was very much linked to the maritime activity of the Netherlands, and the British had a particularly high regard for Dutch naval strength. The Bishop of Llandaff informed the House of Lords in 1787 that a Franco-Dutch naval accord "would be an entire end to our history as a great, a wealthy, and ... a free people," while the Marquis of Lansdowne later averred that "whoever possesses their force and influence in addition to their own – well governed, must rule the world."[17] As such, British opinion was fully convinced of the advantages of preventing French encroachment into the Netherlands. In 1794, for example, *True Briton* declared that "to preserve Holland from the power of France must ever be the true policy of Great Britain."[18] Furthermore, British opinion firmly believed that the Dutch would be

more than willing accomplices in this effort, harking back to their resistance to the expansionism of Louis XIV's France, and believing an Anglo-Dutch connection to be the natural order of things. Even the experience of the recent Fourth Anglo-Dutch War did not dampen this impression, with the conflict being dismissed, in the words of Isaac Barré, as "a concussion of nature".[19] At the time of the outbreak of war in 1793, the Dutch were reported in the press to be as committed as ever to the British cause.[20]

The key ideas in British latent public opinion would have been well known to the well-educated men who made up the Cabinet and diplomatic corps. The standardisation of latent opinion owed much to the widespread availability of printed material by the later eighteenth century, and the governing classes of Britain were steeped in this print culture. As Jennifer Mori pointed out in her fascinating book *The Culture of Diplomacy*, eighteenth-century diplomats were a "unique subset of early-modern political culture", somewhat separate from British society but inextricably both a product of and a participant in the hegemonic expectations of public discourse.[21] The same could be said, to an extent, for politicians. The key decision makers in government and at the embassy in The Hague in the early 1790s not only inhabited the same social world, but shared rather similar upbringings and education. Grenville, Auckland, the Duke of Portland, and rising political star George Canning were all educated at Christ Church, Oxford, the latter two also attending Eton, where Lord President and later Lord Lieutenant of Ireland Earl William Fitzwilliam had studied as a child. President of the Board of Trade the first Earl of Liverpool, Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office James Burges, and Secretary at War William Windham attended University College, Oxford; in a rather broader education than most, the latter also attended Eton and the University of Glasgow. Scottish establishments in fact provided several cabinet ministers, amongst them Dundas and Lord Loughborough, the Lord Chancellor, both of whom went to the

University of Edinburgh. Pitt was perhaps something of an oddity in having attended Cambridge, although Baron St Helens, ambassador to the Netherlands in 1794-5, spent time at St John's, and William Elliot, Secretary to the Embassy, attended Pembroke College. Pitt had been largely schooled by private tutors, but he had also benefited greatly from the education given by his father and former leader of the ministry, the Earl of Chatham.[22] The list could go on to include most ministers and holders of government office. None of this is to suggest that these men received a standardised education, and much less to suggest that there was some form of curriculum that all followed. Those who attended the same institutions often did not overlap, and there were few adolescent friendships that bound cabinet colleagues together. However, all would have been equipped to view the world in broadly similar ways, and in the absence of more detailed studies those world views often stemmed from the reputations and representations prevalent in latent public opinion. It is the contention of this piece that these commonly held preconceptions helped to influence their political decision making.

The latent understandings behind policy were also informed by impressions of Britain's longstanding strategic priorities, policies and alliances. As H. M. Scott has demonstrated, the belief in the benefits of Anglo-Austro-Dutch collaboration that stemmed from the wars against Louis XIV echoed down well into the later eighteenth century, taking on a mythical aspect well beyond the realities of the alliance's utility.[23] Even the relatively feeble Dutch performance against France in the mid-1740s and against Britain in the early 1780s did not dissuade British politicians from seeing the Netherlands as a country of great potential strength, not least because in both instances military failings were ascribed to the Republic's internal political weakness in the absence of strong leadership from the Stadholder. The restoration of the Stadholderate

in 1747, and the removal of the anti-Stadholder Patriot faction in 1787, were thought to have gone some way to curing the Republic of these perceived failings.[24]

There was also a longstanding conception of the Netherlands as an area of acute strategic interest for Britain, which was certainly shared by Britain's leaders in the early 1790s. This contributed in no small part to a staunch determination to defend the Netherlands once war broke out with France. As Lord Auckland, Britain's ambassador in The Hague, averred in 1792, the Netherlands had "great means either of exaggerating our embarrassments or of promoting our security and exertions".[25] Even colonially minded Dundas, who was personally committed to the maintenance and promotion of Britain's Caribbean economy, admitted in July 1793 that the safety of the Netherlands was the "most prominent object of the war" with France.[26] Shortly after war broke out Pitt told Auckland, in response to the latter's exhortation that Britain should defend the Netherlands as if it were a part of Yorkshire, that "we consider the cause of Holland so much our own, that we are ready to fight the battle there as we should be at our own doors", announcing in Parliament that a French threat to the Low Countries was a threat to Britain herself.[27]

The failed defence of the Low Countries certainly did not stem from any apparent *volte face* in strategic priorities. During the Parliamentary debates on the continuation of the war in January and February of 1794, both government and opposition speakers reiterated the importance of preventing the Netherlands, and the country's shipping and wealth, falling into French hands. Grenville argued explicitly that the defence of the Netherlands was necessary to prevent France from using Dutch "wealth and fleets as the instrument of descent on Great Britain".[28] As the military situation deteriorated, even those who advocated throwing in the towel did so with one eye on the strategic importance of the Netherlands. Former Foreign Secretary the Duke

of Leeds argued that it would be advantageous to allow the Netherlands to negotiate a peace in order to prevent France seizing control of the country and its resources.[29] In January 1795, even as the French armies were making good their conquest, Home Secretary the Duke of Portland wrote to Earl Fitzwilliam despairing of the situation in the Netherlands, but avowing that that "I would exert every nerve to save the country".[30] Fitzwilliam himself, one of Portland's closest political allies, replied morosely with his belief that "the wealth of Holland, the ports of Holland, and the fleets of Holland cannot be in the possession of the French without one's seeing imminent Danger of the most formidable invasion of Great Britain."[31] There is no doubt that the defence of the Dutch Republic from French encroachments remained a *leitmotif* of British policy. However, while the strategic and political commitment to the Netherlands remained firm, the military operations conducted to secure Britain's closest ally were anything but.

While political and diplomatic errors contributed to the fall of the Netherlands, it is undeniable that the primary cause was the abject failure of the allied military campaigns. It is not the intention of this article to assess these wider diplomatic or military failings in detail, but an overview of the British contribution is useful to give full context to the analysis of political manoeuvres. The campaigns of 1793-95 were as inglorious as they were unsuccessful from an allied point of view. The French invasion of the Netherlands in early 1793 caught Anglo-Dutch land forces unprepared and saw the fall of the border fortresses of Breda, Geertruidenberg and Klundert, but was driven off largely thanks to the victory of the Prince von Coburg's Austrian army at Neerwinden on 18 March. That victory forced the French army to evacuate not only the Netherlands but most of Belgium. However, despite a good deal of work by Grenville and Baron Thugut, Austrian minister of foreign affairs, to bring about a stronger Austro-

British connection, the British, Dutch, Hanoverian, Austrian and Prussian armies in the Low Countries failed to coordinate operations to any effect and were unable to push the French much beyond their own borders. A politically expedient but strategically pointless attempt to besiege Dunkirk by the Duke of York's Anglo-German army was defeated with considerable loss, including much of the recently-arrived artillery, and achieved nothing other than to offer respite to the French armies to reorganise and gather reinforcements.[32] British reinforcements sent to the Low Countries in autumn 1793 helped to bolster York's army, and were praised by Auckland as being the key factor in maintaining allied possession of the Channel coast in Belgium, but were unable to do much beyond blunting French counterthrusts.[33] The 1793 campaigning season ended with the Netherlands secured but French forces undefeated.

The following year saw the allies move onto the defensive, as none of the powers were willing or able to commit major reinforcements to the region. Britain slightly strengthened its army in the Low Countries, but York proved a mediocre field commander and achieved little of note. His forces were, in any case, compelled to compete for manpower and supplies with new Secretary for War Dundas's pet project of picking off French possessions in the West Indies. At the instigation of London, Prussia was coaxed into remaining in the field, receiving a subsidy of £400,000 and a further £50,000 a month to provide a force of 62,400 soldiers.[34] However, their tardy mobilisation, poor deployment and the clear preoccupation of the Prussian government with Poland meant that they added nothing to the defence of the Low Countries, and Britain's money was entirely wasted.[35] The Dutch army under the Hereditary Prince of Orange, son of the Stadholder, proved equally ineffective. French victories over von Coburg's army at Tourcoing and Fleurus in mid-1794 broke the back of allied resistance in Belgium and pushed the court in Vienna to withdraw their forces from the outlying

province, despite London's attempts to keep them in the theatre. A further 7,000 British troops were dispatched but could do little to make up for the loss of the Austrian army. From late summer the brunt of the campaign fell on the British, Dutch and German forces, who conducted a fighting retreat toward the Dutch border but, outnumbered and outgeneralled, were unable to stop the French advance.

The failings of the allied forces were partly in leadership, partly in morale, and partly in sheer numbers. At this stage British and Hanoverian forces numbered over 36,000 on paper, but Adjutant-General James Craig estimated that even including Dutch troops the allies could call on no more than 35,000 effectives.[36] They were faced with a French army over double that size, with support from large flanking forces. The lines of command of the allied force were also unclear. Both the Prince of Orange and Grenville recognised the failings of divided leadership, but little was done to rectify the situation.[37] The allied generals were in any case prone to adopting strategic manoeuvres that left them wrong-footed or compromised a promising defensive position. When they did stand and fight, French troops frequently had the better of the action. By November the allied armies turned at bay and took up position along the defensive river lines of the Netherlands, hoping to winter in relative security behind these trusty ancient bulwarks. Yet even Mother Nature abandoned their cause and, in the coldest winter for a generation, the defensive waterways froze solid, allowing the French armies to stroll across the icebound river barriers. With despondency apparently at a fever pitch, several key strongpoints surrendered without resistance. The remainder of the dispirited allied armies fled eastwards, abandoning the Netherlands to its fate.

The military failings were at least partially compounded by the mutual distrust between Dutch and British forces. This began at the very top, as it is clear that York, the Prince of Orange, and the Hereditary Prince did not enjoy any particular degree of

mutual respect. York seemed to lay much of the blame for the failure of his designs on Dunkirk in 1793 at the feet of the Hereditary Prince. Writing to his father George III on 10 September, York complained that "the Hereditary Prince of Orange has as usual taken flight", compromising the British strategic position, and five days later added bluntly that the Prince "ran away…without firing a shot."[38] The Dutch leadership for their part seemed less than impressed by the Duke, with the Prince of Orange writing in November 1794 that nothing good could be expected from his command of allied forces, and that, although well meaning, he was unsuited to lead an army.[39] Of each other's troops the allies had equally little good to say. York was scathing of the performance of the Dutch, with repeated denunciations of their supposed failings: writing in August 1793, he commented caustically that "our good friends the Dutch have again performed with their usual cowardice", and after the Battle of Menin the following month claimed that "the conduct of the Dutch troops on the thirteenth was by all the accounts I have heard, more shameful than can be conceived".[40] The thoughts of his subordinates were scarcely more complimentary.[41] Even George III seemed to share these views, writing to Grenville that "so bad troops and so indifferent a general [i.e. the Hereditary Prince] can scarcely be found out of Italy", although his views were possibly coloured by the reports from his favourite son.[42] The Dutch tended to be a little more circumspect with criticism, but they too were driven to complain bitterly of the conduct of British forces as they withdrew through the Netherlands in late 1794, accusing them of fleeing at first sight of the enemy and pausing only to plunder, rape and murder the Dutch inhabitants in their path.[43]

Once the Netherlands had fallen to French troops, the British government did make some final attempts to assemble forces to regain the region. As late as mid-January 1795, Pitt, Grenville and Portland held a private conference with Hendrik

Fagel, secretary to the Dutch States General, to discuss whether the British army could continue to defend the Netherlands.[44] Once firm intelligence arrived to show that continued defence was impractical, serious consideration was given to offering large subsidies to Prussia, Austria and even Russia if they would take up cudgels for a counter-offensive into the Low Countries. Grenville essentially vetoed any further Prussian subsidy, the prospect of which evaporated in any case once Prussia entered peace talks with France, and the lack of interest of either Austria or Russia in fighting in the Netherlands contributed to the eventual failure of discussions in those quarters.[45] However, it took time for the British government's dream of liberating the Netherlands to die. It was arguably not until after a second failed campaign in the Netherlands in 1799 that London accepted the lack of any realistic prospect of recovering the country.

Military inadequacies were certainly the major cause of the allied defeat, but the allied field forces themselves were ill-equipped by their political masters for the task of facing the legions of France's republican regime. From Britain's perspective, this was at least partly due to the perceived lack of commitment from their allies. The non-appearance of the Prussian troops for which they had paid was a major blow, but so was the relatively feeble contribution of the Netherlands to the overall allied forces. Throughout the war, British politicians hoped for and expected a far greater military and financial commitment from their primary continental ally. This expectation came from their understanding of the Netherlands as a faded but still important power in Europe. The primary underlying understandings that pervaded British decision making were the ideas that the Netherlands possessed the military and financial strength for a prolonged struggle against France, and that the country was committed to upholding the anti-French British alliance no matter the cost. As such, London expected that their ally should bear a far more significant portion of the joint military effort.

This led to the perhaps paradoxical belief that the British commitment to the war in the Low Countries need not be onerous. From the very start, there seemed to be a dual rhetoric emerging from London. On the one hand the Netherlands was repeatedly identified as an area of key strategic value, as Britain's closest ally, and as a country in whose survival Britain was inextricably interested, all of which leads to the expectation that Britain would do all that it could to secure the Netherlands from French encroachments. On the other hand, Pitt and Grenville seemed eager to minimise British commitment and sought reasons to justify the expense of the campaign to the British people once the immediate crisis of 1793 had passed, which led more than once to decisions that made more political than military sense.[46] Shortly after the opening of the war, when French forces threatened a full-scale invasion of the Netherlands, Pitt wrote to Auckland that Britain was willing to do everything possible to support the Dutch forces during the current crisis, but that he did not wish to commit naval forces to the region for more than a fortnight.[47] After that, he blithely assumed, Dutch forces would be ready to assume defensive duties alone. Despite the likelihood of war from November 1792, few British troops were immediately available for overseas service, with only the Guards Brigade in place by March of the following year. Once the land campaign was underway the Cabinet deemed it more prudent to build York's army from hired German troops rather than committing British redcoats to the fray in any numbers, a decision that did little to add coherence to the Duke's command. The detour to attack Dunkirk, admittedly taken once the Netherlands had been temporarily secured, was entirely a political decision, apparently driven by George III's desire to placate the British public with the capture of a French port city, and to help to secure a closer understanding with Austria.[48]

The rather muddled opening to the defence of the Netherlands in 1793 was by no means unusual for a British overseas campaign in this period. As Robert Sutcliffe noted, decisions to send expeditions abroad were usually taken at ministerial level with little pre-planning, and generally without a field commander being consulted or even appointed.[49] York was given command of British forces in the Low Countries in 1793 too late to have any meaningful input into the preparations, and received instructions notable mainly for their vagueness.[50] Nor indeed did Britain's political leaders think that this should materially harm their chances of success. The Duke of Richmond, then Master-General of the Ordnance, wrote to Pitt in April 1793 that the role of the Austrian forces in the defence of the Netherlands had been unnecessary, and that 'however formidable the attack might at first appear, we trust that, under all the circumstances of the war, it might have been defeated by the Dutch themselves, aided by the English and the Hanoverians in our pay.'[51] This confidence stemmed perhaps from the fact that by April 1793 the crisis had passed, and it was easier to boast with the French armies in full retreat. Richmond also sought at this juncture to avoid a major British commitment on the continent.[52] But it also came from what Richmond believed he knew about the Netherlands; that it was a strong power, committed to opposing France, and historically capable of looking to its own defences. Richmond was by no means alone in this interpretation of the Netherlands, and the correspondence of Pitt, Grenville, and Britain's representatives in the United Provinces throughout the two years of conflict indicates that all were convinced that Dutch wealth and national character should compel them to deploy significant military and naval forces in their own defence, if seriously threatened with a French invasion.

The persistent assumption of Dutch military strength by the British government goes some way to explaining the surprising failure of Britain to bolster their forces

defending the Netherlands to sufficient levels. Throughout the campaigns in 1793 and 1794 there was a constant belief in British government that the Netherlands was not throwing her full weight behind the war effort. Even before war broke out British diplomats and politicians believed that the Netherlands ought to be able to do more to provide for her own defences, and correspondence from British officials on both sides of the North Sea paints a picture of concern and frustration that Dutch efforts were not matching British expectation. In December 1792, when an assault on the southern Dutch frontier was deemed highly possible, Grenville wrote to Auckland that "the land forces of the Republic…[are] most miserably deficient", and hoped for vigorous remedial action from the Prince of Orange and States General, a sentiment that became a repeated refrain in his dispatches.[53] Early the next month Auckland lamented the painful slowness of Dutch mobilisation, which he attributed to the "palsied system" of administration rather than unwillingness on the part of Dutch leaders, while less circumspectly young diplomat Herbert Taylor complained to Burges that "we are to fight for [the Dutch] whilst they remain smoking at home".[54] On 22 January a clearly exasperated Grenville confided to Auckland "I am almost tired of harping on the same string of urging the Dutch Government to energy and exertion".[55] Once war was declared, Auckland initially sought to reassure London that the Dutch were rallying to the common cause, reporting that military preparations were proceeding apace, with almost 50,000 men under arms.[56] Pitt hoped that York's arrival might give further impetus to Dutch efforts, writing to the king in early March that "there is at length a fairer prospect of the exertions being adequate to the emergency".[57] However, within weeks complaints began again that the Dutch were not contributing as fully to the war effort as might be expected from so major a power, an apparent failure that Grenville partially attributed to a "very pernicious" despondency in the country.[58]

Despite any despondency or failures on the part of the current Dutch regime, it is clear from the discussions over territorial indemnity in mid- to late-1793 that Grenville and the wider Cabinet did still consider the Netherlands to be a power of some weight in the European balance. All of the coalition powers held pretentions to territorial indemnity once the war was won, and Grenville was keen to second the Dutch claim to territory in the northern Austrian Netherlands that would further secure their southern frontier.[59] The Austrian government, and especially Thugut, were deeply reluctant to grant territory to what they clearly thought a faded power, but Grenville became committed to insisting on a restitution of the borders of 1715 – borders that had ascribed a key role to the Netherlands in acting as a buffer against further French expansionism.[60] Austrian reticence, however, had little impact on British thinking. Time and again Grenville pushed Dutch demands, even going so far as to delay the signing of the treaty of alliance with Austria until such an indemnity had been agreed. Michael Duffy concluded that the Dutch indemnity was the key sticking point in otherwise close Anglo-Austrian relations throughout 1793.[61] Part of this manoeuvring was almost certainly political, as Grenville calculated that securing the indemnity would solidify London's influence over the Dutch government. Yet it is also a clear indication of the faith placed by Cabinet in the idea of the Dutch alliance, and an indication that British ministers still trusted to the strength of the Netherlands in the longer term, despite their ally's apparently underwhelming performance in the ongoing war.

Throughout the conflict Britain maintained a public support for the Netherlands, but there was a clear private belief that the Republic's exertions were by no means concomitant with its status. A year into the war, in January 1794, Pitt was moved to defend the palpable weakness of Dutch mobilisation in the Commons, saying that their continental efforts had naturally detracted from their naval commitments. Privately,

however, Grenville complained bitterly to the British representative in The Hague of "how disproportionate the exertions hitherto made by the [Dutch] Republic have been to those of Great Britain and Austria" and demanded "the efforts [of] which the country is really capable".[62] The foreign secretary considered Dutch pleas of exhaustion disingenuous and ignored them, continuing to believe as late as October 1794 that "any tolerable exertions" on the part of the Netherlands would see the country saved.[63] He repeatedly insisted that the British commitment to the Netherlands was sufficient if the Dutch adopted similar measures in their defence that they had in the past.[64] Writing in September 1794 to Lord St Helens, Britain's new ambassador to The Hague, he complained that "in all the wars which we have hitherto carried on in common the proportion which the Dutch have borne of the common burdens has very far exceeded that of their present efforts", and went on to bemoan the fact that the exertions of the country were "so inadequate to former experience, and to present expectation."[65] Britain had not fought alongside the Netherlands in earnest for nearly half a century at this stage, yet the idea that the Netherlands might not be the same power as formerly, or that his expectations might be awry, seemingly did not enter into Grenville's calculations. While the British government remained tactful in the demands that it made of the Stadholder and States General, it is abundantly clear from Grenville's dispatches to his representatives in The Hague that London expected more in terms of ships, men and material to be committed to the common cause. Even when Cabinet finally accepted in mid-November 1794 the Dutch request that they should be permitted to negotiate a separate peace, they maintained that it was because it was "impractical under the present circumstances to induce the Dutch to make such efforts for their own protection as are now become necessary", rather than because such efforts were beyond the capabilities of the Republic.[66]

In a similar vein, British politicians repeatedly overestimated the financial capacity of the Netherlands to contribute to the allied war effort, and refused to commit the monetary resources that they thought should most properly be provided by the Dutch. Throughout the early 1790s British ministers held firmly onto the belief, so engrained in British opinion for the past century, that the Netherlands was a country of immense riches, and that the Dutch government should be able to call upon that wealth in a time of crisis.[67] There were occasional hints in the correspondence between Britain's representatives in the Hague and ministers in London that the Republic might not possess the resources of earlier times, but this seemed to be little understood in Britain. Auckland's allusion in January 1793 to the "crippled means" of the Republic went ignored by Grenville, who simply reiterated his hope that the Netherlands would act in concert with Britain should conflict arise.[68] As the war crisis unfolded, the Dutch government repeatedly pleaded poverty when confronted by demands for further expenditure, while British ministers persistently refused to accept the veracity of their claims; the Netherlands was known to be proverbially rich, and so rich it must be. London's initial indulgent scepticism of claims of impecuniousness quickly turned to irritation as Dutch actions once again failed to match the exertions of which Britain's leaders believed the country should be capable. When the Dutch government protested that it would be impossible to raise money for the proposed Prussian subsidy in early 1794, Grenville angrily insisted that "in a country abounding with specie, as is the case Holland, a loan might easily be raised on the security of the Dutch government", and suggested that a sum of £400,000 should by no means be beyond them.[69] Two months later, an exasperated William Elliot wrote to the Foreign Secretary to complain that the Dutch failure to raise "a trifling sum of money" of only one million guilders (c.£90,000) was holding up preparations for the forthcoming campaign.[70] Even in September 1794,

with the French forces making rapid strides towards the Dutch border, the British government once again refused to countenance a subsidy for the Netherlands, with Grenville airily informing Dutch ambassador Baron Van Nagell that "the Republic of the United Provinces possesses within itself ample resources for exertions of that nature fully adequate even to the exigency of the present crisis".[71]

By October 1794 British politicians had come to understand the impossibility of the Dutch government raising sufficient money and offered to guarantee loans on their behalf, providing that the finance was raised in the Netherlands. By this time, however, the Dutch financial markets had begun to bet on an allied defeat, and money was not forthcoming.[72] This clear vote of no confidence was a key contributor to discussions in the Netherlands of attempting to broker a peace treaty with France, but even at this juncture Grenville refused to accept that the Dutch could no longer afford the game. "That the means of the Republic or her resources of any kind are exhausted," he wrote in late November, "is a position that cannot be admitted by anyone who knows what those resources were at the commencement of this contest, and what has been done in the course of it".[73] No matter the evidence placed before the Foreign Secretary and Cabinet, those in charge of British strategy continued to base their decisions on their preconceptions of the strength of Dutch wealth and resources.

This is not to suggest that ministers simply ignored information, or that they were somehow too stupid to comprehend what they were told. Instead, it is suggested here that the latent opinion of Dutch character helped them to explain, at least to themselves, the difference between expectations and reality of the Dutch contribution. Dutch character was, in the British popular imagination, inspired by the desire for profit and lucre, and British representatives in The Hague and ministers in London periodically explained Dutch conduct as driven by frugality, greed or gain. In January

1793 Auckland warned that if war came Britain would have to work hard on behalf of the Netherlands, as Dutch "mercantile spirit" would prevent preparations unless the danger was "apparent to all eyes and palpable at the moment."[74] Dutch opinion, he believed, could be swayed in favour of a policy only if it could be made to appeal to self-interest, an idea fully in keeping with general British prejudices. St Helens similarly warned in August 1794 that increased British efforts would simply lead to decreased commitment from the Dutch, writing to the Foreign Secretary that "in the proportion that we add to our share of the joint-stock of ways and means, their pedlar-like spirit leads them, instead of doing the like, to subduct from theirs, so as to leave the sum total nearly as before".[75] Even Grenville himself complained that, in his view "the failure of the loans in Holland arises rather in a too great desire of those who have proposed them to keep down the rate of interest below what the state of the market will allow, than from any real scarcity of money."[76] St Helens certainly placed the blame squarely on the "selfish and unpatriotic conduct" of Dutch financiers who had, he claimed, disproved the adage that "the subject's purse is the sovereign's best treasury".[77] In each case stereotyped Dutch character was used to explain the apparent failings of the Dutch state rather than providing an incentive for British policy, but the lack of commitment by the British government can at least partly be attributed to their belief that they should not have to provide resources to so supposedly wealthy an ally.

British frustrations with the Dutch contribution to the allied cause stemmed not only from the belief that the Netherlands had the wherewithal to stand firm against French encroachments, but that she possessed the will to do so. Despite the large pro-French party that had arisen during the Patriot unrest of the 1780s, and despite the apparent continued unpopularity of the Stadholder's regime with some in the Netherlands, British politicians remained wilfully blind to indications that the Dutch

simply did not wish to support the war effort. Initial despondency was dismissed as a natural consequence of the form of Dutch government which was, in the words of Auckland, "by its nature subject to the influence of jarring passions and to the weight of popular cabals".[78] British latent opinion of the Netherlands held that the Dutch had a fierce love of independence and an equally fierce dislike of France, and these two tropes were repeatedly invoked by Britain's decision makers when commenting on their commitment to the Netherlands. This was perhaps not entirely without basis from the information received from across the North Sea, which contained consistently contradictory reports that at least partly fed into Pitt and Grenville's preconceptions. Both Auckland and later St Helens interspersed their complaints about the failures of Dutch mobilisation with professions of the goodwill of the Republic's leadership, although the reluctance of the Dutch to fight is also evident throughout their correspondence. As late as October 1794 St Helens took pains to pass on reports of the great "zeal and public spirit" demonstrated by the Dutch in preparing their defences, even while his dispatches painted a clear picture of the Dutch as unwilling and disaffected confederates.[79] However, Grenville's belief in the fundamental nature of Dutch character remained firm. On 30 October he wrote to Van Nagell that he fully expected the love of liberty and of their country to drive the Dutch to greater efforts in their own defence: "*leur amour pour la Patrie, leur zèle pour les intérêts de la liberté … doit contribuer à écarter ce danger*."[80] This opinion was, perhaps, damaged by experience; the need to deploy 4,000 British troops to Amsterdam in late 1794 to prop up the pro-Stadholder city administration, the increasingly blunt denunciations of Dutch behaviour by British diplomats, and the constant refrain of exhaustion from the Dutch themselves pushed ministers to rethink their position.[81] By mid-November both Cabinet and king were in agreement that the Dutch were committed to peace at any price, rather

than to the vigorous defence of their borders.[82] However, the enduring shadow of the British belief in the Dutch love of independence and natural inclination to Anglophilia was to continue to fall on ministerial thinking until after the failed invasion of 1799.[83]

It is evident from this that British ministers became convinced that their own contribution to the war effort was sufficient, if only the Dutch could be inveigled to supply the troops, resources and resilience expected of them. There was certainly some perhaps unwarranted self-congratulation by British politicians. In January 1794 the Earl of Mornington declared in Parliament that "the seasonable assistance afforded by this country to the Dutch, was alone the circumstance which encouraged and enabled them to make so vigorous an effort in that critical conjuncture of their affairs", happily if misguidedly assigning credit for the deliverance of the Netherlands in 1793 to British efforts.[84] In October 1794 Grenville grumbled to St Helens that "the exertions which have been made on the part of this country for the protection of Holland are too evident to make it necessary for me at this moment to recapitulate them", despite his very recent refusal of financial assistance to the beleaguered Republic.[85] The following month he stated his belief that, should the Netherlands fall, it would not be "from any want of efforts on His Majesty's part", but instead because of the absence of the allies on which Britain had an expectation to rely.[86] In this context it is perhaps unfair to criticise the actions of the British Cabinet; in their view, they had done all that they could and indeed all that was necessary to secure the Netherlands. However, as has been argued above, their views were tinted by their assumptions about Dutch strength and character, and their estimation of the resources required to defend their ally was therefore fundamentally flawed.

The overall British campaigns of 1793-95 must of course be put in a much wider context than Britain's commitment to the Netherlands. The need to align the war aims

of Britain and her continental allies, most notably Austria, was a driving concern, as were the issues of territorial indemnity, the partition of Poland, the future of France, the long-term situation in the colonies, and the British position in the Mediterranean. All of these issues, and more, took time, interest and resources away from the defence of the Low Countries. Equally, any strategic errors made were by no means confined to the Court of St James. Especially in the early days of the conflict, all powers seemed to be vying to position their forces to take advantage of the redistribution of territory in the general peace, rather than focusing on actually winning the war. Fortunately perhaps for France, allied preoccupations in Poland and the West Indies helped to draw some of the sting from the assaults on France, and allowed the nascent Republic to cling on.

However, once France had resumed the offensive in 1794 it became clear that the British commitment to the Low Countries was not, and had not been, enough to provide security for those provinces. There is absolutely no doubt that Pitt and Grenville considered the Netherlands as crucial to Britain's war effort and wished to see her defended, and their relative inaction in the face of defeat and Dutch dejection stemmed primarily from a belief that the Dutch would ultimately be both able and willing to defend themselves. Their expectations of the Netherlands, and those of their colleagues in the wider Cabinet and diplomatic corps, seem to have emerged from more general British preconceptions, perceptions and prejudices regarding the Netherlands. Their belief in Dutch strength, wealth, and fundamental opposition to France remained largely unshaken to the very end, and led them to ascribe Dutch weakness to lack of appropriate effort on the part of the Republic's leadership. They continued to believe throughout the two years of campaigning that the Netherlands was capable of far greater commitments to the allied effort, and therefore saw no need to commit more British resources that might be used to gain strategic advantage elsewhere. The fall of the Netherlands shook

British ministers badly, but the failure to offer any effective response to the French conquest in the early months of 1795 was perhaps a microcosm of British efforts over the past two years: an over-reliance on the potential of allied forces who did not share British strategic goals, a willingness to use Britain's financial muscle that somehow failed to translate into meaningful action, and a reluctance or inability to use British forces to achieve Britain's war aims. While wider failings of British war policy and the military campaigns in the Low Countries were crucial to the loss of the Netherlands, the reliance of British ministers on outdated perceptions of the Dutch in British public opinion without doubt played its part.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Dr Rachael Whitbread and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments, suggestions and feedback on the text.

References:

---

[1] Note on nomenclature: the United Provinces of the Netherlands, or Dutch Republic, was frequently (and incorrectly) referred to as "Holland" in eighteenth-century writing. The name "the Netherlands" was applied to the Austrian Netherlands, roughly modern-day Belgium. This article will use modern terminology throughout, i.e. the Netherlands will mean the United Provinces/Dutch Republic. Holland will refer to the province of that name.

[2] S.T. Bindoff, *The Scheldt Question to 1839* (London, 1945), 144; J. Holland Rose, "Documents Relating to the Rupture with France in 1793", *English Historical Review* 27/105(1912), 120-22.

[3] Christopher Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War, 1803-1815* (Manchester, 1992), 86.

[4] Nathaniel W. Jarrett, "False Start: Britain and Coalition Warfare in 1794", *War in History*, 24/2(2017), 134-53.

[5] J.W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* (13 vols, London, 1899-1930), 4; Alfred Burne, *The Noble Duke of York* (London, 1949); Michael Duffy, "British War Policy: The Austrian Alliance, 1793-1801" (DPhil thesis, Oxford University, 1971); Jarrett, "False Start".

[6] N.A.M. Rodger, "The British View of the Functioning of the Anglo-Dutch Alliance", in G.J.A. Raven & N.A.M. Rodger, eds., *Navies and Armies: The Anglo-Dutch Relationship in War and Peace, 1688-1988* (Edinburgh, 1990), 27.

[7] Muriel Chamberlain, *"Pax Britannica"? British Foreign Policy, 1789-1914* (London, 1988), 8.

[8] See the introduction of Graeme Callister, *War, Public Opinion and Policy in Britain, France and the Netherlands, 1785-1815* (Cham, 2017), esp. 19-25.

[9] Keith Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1990), 171.

[10] Manfred Beller, "Perception, Image, Imagology", in Manfred Beller & Joep Leerssen, eds., *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters* (Leiden, 2007), 11.

[11] *Anti-Jacobin*, 20 November 1797.

[12] A fuller treatment of British opinions can be found in Callister, *War, Public Opinion and Policy*, 217-45.

[13] Hugh Dunthorne, "British Travellers in Eighteenth-Century Holland: Tourism and the Appreciation of Dutch Culture", *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 5(1982), 77-84; Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Character, 1650-1850* (Oxford, 2000), 35-6, 235; Ann Radcliffe, *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794* (London, 1795); Harry Peckham, *A Tour Through Holland* (4th edn, London, 1788); Anon., *A Trip to Holland, Containing Sketches of Characters* (2 vols, London, 1786), 1: 35-6; 2: 29; Samuel Ireland, *A Picturesque Tour Through Holland, Brabant and Part of France* (2 vols, London, 1790), 1: 19.

[14] Radcliffe, *A Journey*, 76.

[15] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (London, 1776), book IV, ch.7, part III & book IV, ch.2.

[16] *World*, 3 November 1792.

[17] UKPP, <http://parlipapers.proquest.com>, accessed June 2016, Llandaff, 28 February 1787 & Lansdowne, 27 January 1795.

[18] *True Briton*, 15 July 1794.

[19] UKPP, <http://parlipapers.proquest.com>, accessed June 2016, Barré, 14 March 1785.

[20] *World*, 3 November 1792; *London Chronicle*, 4 December 1792; *The Times*, 17 January 1793; *General Evening Post*, 23 February 1793.

[21] Jennifer Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy: Britain in Europe c.1750-1830* (Manchester, 2010), 2.

[22] William Hague, *William Pitt the Younger* (London, 2005), 17-18.

[23] H.M. Scott, "'The True Principles of the Revolution': The Duke of Newcastle and the Old System", in Jeremy Black, ed., *Knights Errant and True Englishmen: British Foreign Policy, 1660-1800* (Edinburgh, 1989), 77-9.

[24] For the restoration of the Stadholder's position in 1787, see Alfred Cobban, *Ambassadors and Secret Agents: The Diplomacy of the First Earl of Malmesbury at The Hague* (London, 1954) and Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands 1780-1813* (London, 2005), 120-32. For the internal political structures and rivalries of the Dutch Republic see Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford, 1998), esp. part IV, 959-1130; Margaret Jacob & Wijnand Mijnhardt, eds., *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment and Revolution* (Ithaca/London, 1992).

[25] Auckland to Grenville, 6 January 1792, Add MSS [Additional Manuscripts, British Library, London, UK] 36814.

[26] M. Duffy, "British Policy in the War against Revolutionary France", in Colin Jones, ed., *Britain and Revolutionary France: Conflict, Subversion and Propaganda* (Exeter, 1983), 13

[27] Auckland to Grenville, 15 February 1793, in Walter Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue, Esq., Preserved at Dropmore* (10 Vols, London, 1892-1927), 2: 379-80; Pitt to

Auckland, 2 March 1793, Add MSS 46519; Ernest Rhys, ed., *Orations on the French War by William Pitt* (London, 1906), 3-14.

[28] U.K. Parliamentary Papers (UKPP), accessed 18 February 2020, https://parlipapers-proquest-com. Debate 17 February 1794.

[29] Oscar Browning, ed., *The Political Memoranda of Francis, Fifth Duke of Leeds* (London, 1884), 211-12.

[30] Portland to Fitzwilliam, 14 January 1795, WWM [Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments, Sheffield City Archives, Sheffield, UK] F/31/38.

[31] Fitzwilliam to Portland, 23 January 1795, WWM F/5/23-27.

[32] Charles Esdaile, *The Wars of the French Revolution, 1792-1801* (Abingdon, 2019), 107-08; Michael Duffy, "'A Particular Service': The British Government and the Dunkirk Expedition, 1793", *The English Historical Review*, 91/360(1976).

[33] Fitzpatrick, ed., *Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue*, 2: 455.

[34] Hague, *William Pitt*, 350

[35] Karl A. Roider, *Baron Thugut and Austria's Response to the French Revolution* (Princeton, 1987), 146-47; Jennifer Mori, *William Pitt and the French Revolution, 1785-1795* (Edinburgh, 1997), 207-09; Fitzpatrick, ed., *Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue*, 2: 565-66, 591-93.

[36] Burne, *The Noble Duke of York*, 170.

[37] Prince of Orange to St Helens, 22 September & Grenville to St Helens, 12 October 1794, FO [Foreign Office Records, National Archives, Kew, London, UK] 37/55.

[38] A. Aspinall, ed., *The Later Correspondence of George III* (Cambridge, 1963), 2: 90-96.

[39] H.T. Colenbrander, ed., *Gedenkstukken der Algemeene Geschiedenis van Nederland van 1795 tot 1840* (10 vols, 'S-Gravenhage, 1905-22), 1: 502-03.

[40] Burne, *The Noble Duke of York*, 70; Aspinall, ed., *Later Correspondence*, 95-96.

[41] L.T. Jones, *An Historical Journal of the British Campaign on the Continent in the Year 1794* (Birmingham, 1797), 151; *An Accurate and Impartial Narrative of the War, by an Officer of*

the Guards (2 vols, London, 1796), vol. 2; Robert Brown, *An Impartial Journal of a Detachment from the Brigade of Foot Guards* (London, 1795).

[42] Aspinall, ed., *Later Correspondence*, 93.

[43] Collectie Fagel [Het Nationaal Archief, The Hague, Netherlands] 1854, pieces 49 & 50.

[44] Fagel to Pensionary, 13 January 1795, Collectie Fagel, 1854.

[45] Mori, *William Pitt*, 216-23; M. Duffy, "Pitt, Grenville and the Conduct of British Foreign Policy in the 1790s", in Black, ed., *Knights Errant*, 158-59.

[46] Duffy, "A Particular Service", 532.

[47] Pitt to Auckland, 2 March 1793, Add MSS 46519.

[48] Burne, *The Noble Duke of York*, 41-42; Duffy, "British War Policy", 23-24.

[49] Robert K. Sutcliffe, *British Expeditionary Warfare and the Defeat of Napoleon, 1793-1815* (London, 2016), 22.

[50] Burne, *The Noble Duke of York*, 37.

[51] Richmond to Pitt, 5 April 1793, in J. Holland Rose, "The Duke of Richmond on the Conduct of the War in 1793", *The English Historical Review*, 25/99(1910), 554-55.

[52] Duffy, "British War Policy", 22-23.

[53] Fitzpatrick, ed., *Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue*, 2: 359-60.

[54] Auckland to Grenville, 2 January 1793, FO 37/43; Taylor to Burges, 23 January 1793, Dep. Bland Burges [Bodleian Library, Oxford, UK] 43.

[55] Fitzpatrick ed., *Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue*, 2: 371.

[56] Auckland to Grenville, 8 Feb 1793, FO 37/44, TNA.

[57] Aspinall, ed., *Later Correspondence*, 2: 17-18.

[58] Fitzpatrick, ed., *Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue*, 2: 464.

[59] Auckland to Grenville, 9 April 1793, FO 37/47.

[60] Duffy, "British War Policy", 53-55, 65-68.

[61] Duffy, "British War Policy", 70-71.

[62] UKPP, debate 29 January 1794; Grenville to Elliot, 28 January 1794, FO 37/51.

[63] Grenville to St Helens, 3 October 1794, FO 37/55.

[64] Grenville to St Helens, 24 November 1794, FO 37/56; Grenville to St Helens, passim, FO 37/55.

[65] Grenville to St Helens, 25 September 1794, FO 37/55.

[66] Minute of Cabinet, 18 November 1794, Colenbrander, ed., *Gedenkstukken*, 1: 517-18.

[67] Auckland to Leeds, f.21, FO 37/29.

[68] Fitzpatrick, ed., *Manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue*, 362, 366.

[69] Grenville to Elliot, 28 January 1794, FO 37/51.

[70] Elliot to Grenville, 4 March 1794, FO 37/52.

[71] Grenville to St Helens, 25 September 1794, FO 37/55.

[72] St Helens to Grenville, 31 October 1794, FO 37/55.

[73] Grenville to St Helens, 25 November 1794, FO 37/56.

[74] Auckland to Grenville, 11 January 1793, FO 37/43.

[75] Colenbrander, ed., *Gedenkstukken*, 1: 476.

[76] Grenville to St Helens, 25 September 1794, FO 37/55.

[77] Colenbrander, ed., *Gedenkstukken*, 1: 476.

[78] Auckland to Grenville, 6 January 1792, Add MSS 36814.

[79] St Helens to Grenville, 30 September 1794, FO 37/55; St Helens to Grenville, 11 November 1794 (& passim), FO 37/56.

[80] Grenville to Nagell, 30 October 1794, Collectie Fagel, 1854.

[81] FO 37/44-57; Dep. Bland Burges 37; Schama, *Patriots and Liberators*, 177.

[82] Colenbrander, ed., *Gedenkstukken*, 1: 517-18.

[83] See Callister, *War, Public Opinion and Policy*, chapter 8.

[84] UKPP, debate 21 January 1794.

[85] Grenville to St Helens, 3 October 1794, FO 37/55.

[86] Grenville to St Helens, 25 November 1794, FO 37/56.